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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 001658

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SUBJECT: TURKEY: DTP PULLED IN OPPOSING DIRECTIONS

REF: A. ANKARA 1653

[1](#)B. ANKARA 1538

[1](#)C. ANKARA 1470

Classified By: POL Counselor Daniel O'Grady, reasons 1.4 (b,d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: The Democratic Society Party (DTP) in Turkey is being torn between two trains of thought. On one hand, co-chairman Ahmet Turk and those aligned with him are attempting, at least in words, to distance themselves from the violent actions of the terrorist Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK). On the other, co-chairwoman Emine Ayna and those close to her consider the PKK the legitimate voice of the Kurdish people in Turkey, and insist that jailed PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan be an interlocutor for the government on the Kurdish issue. While sources within the DTP make it clear that the party is holding together, moderates stress that PKK pressure and intimidation prohibits them from even speaking out within the party, let alone in the broader public arena.  
END SUMMARY

Ahmet Turk: DTP As a Peaceful, Legitimate Political Party  
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[1](#)2. (C) Ahmet Turk, co-chairman of the DTP, has clearly stated on several public occasions (including the party convention in October, REF C) that the DTP is a party of peace and democracy. While stopping short of condemning the PKK, Turk has distanced his party from PKK violence and from calls for an autonomous or independent "Kurdistan" in Turkey. In his address to the parliament on November 13 to discuss the government's Democratic Opening initiative, Turk stressed the importance of peace and economic progress for the Kurdish people in Turkey (REF A). Although he spouted the traditional rhetoric about oppression of Kurds and the mistakes of previous governments, he struck a chord of inclusiveness saying that all citizens would benefit from democratic reforms, and that the changes proposed by the government would make Turkey stronger. Both privately and publicly, Turk has attempted to distance the DTP from PKK violence while still insisting that the motives for forming the PKK and the political goals of the PKK were still valid.

[1](#)3. (C) Sirri Sakik, a DTP MP from Mus who is close to Turk, told us on November 19 that he hoped the Democratic Opening initiative would make it easier for the DTP to distance itself from the PKK. Sakik, like others in the party, consistently calls for a lowering of the percentage of the vote needed for a party to enter parliament so that smaller

parties could be represented. Sakik confirmed that there was a split within the DTP between those who aligned with the PKK and those who did not. However, when asked whether such a change in election regulations would create a situation where the party would split in two, Sakik simply laughed and changed the subject, not denying that such a split could occur. He stressed that all of the DTP wants democracy and peace in the southeast, although there are differences of opinion within the party as to how to go about accomplishing such goals.

Emine Ayna: DTP Legitimizes the PKK, Follows Ocalan's Orders  
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14. (C) Co-chairwoman Emine Ayna, on the other hand, leads the section of the party that is closely aligned with the PKK and wants to legitimize the terrorist organization -- and its jailed leader Abdullah Ocalan -- as the representative voice of the Kurdish people in Turkey. During the party's convention in October, although Ayna gave a balanced speech toeing the party line of peace and democracy, she made her allegiances clear when talking about the PKK and the need for the government to speak to them directly. When PKK supporters tried to take the stage, she stressed that, "NOW is not the time for this," implying that clearly there would be a time for such celebrations.

15. (C) Sebahat Tuncel, the DTP Foreign Affairs Advisor, is closely aligned with Emine Ayna. Tuncel told PolCouns on October 23 that the PKK is the voice of the Kurdish people, and that "more than three million Kurds in the southeast

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support Ocalan as their representative." She pushed for the U.S. to remove the PKK from its list of designated terrorist organizations and stated that the recent Treasury designation of three PKK leaders as "drug kingpins" was a "lie." (Note: She even contended that the USG "knows this is a lie," which we firmly rejected. End Note) She stressed that the PKK returnees from northern Iraq (REF B) had returned not to surrender, but on behalf of Ocalan to negotiate with the GOT for a lasting peace. Tuncel self-identified as an Alevi, and stressed that the DTP and PKK are working not just for the Kurds, but also for the Alevis and all other oppressed members of Turkish society. Throughout the meeting, she took on a combative tone with us, in the end telling us that the U.S. should not view all Kurds as terrorists; we stressed that we did not.

Other DTP Members Caught in the Middle  
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16. (C) Bengi Yildiz, a DTP deputy from Batman, walks a middle line between the two camps. Yildiz told Poloff on November 16 that there were definitely two camps within the DTP, but that "so long as our children are in the mountains, the party will not split because anyone who leaves would be viewed as a traitor." Yildiz stressed that the DTP needed to be completely independent from the PKK; the PKK should stay out of politics and the politicians should stay out of violence -- although he stopped short of condemning the violence. He stated that DTP members are not allowed to talk about these ideas, even within the party, because of PKK pressure and influence. Yildiz lamented the fact that because the DTP cannot come out strongly as a party independent of the PKK, it is not trusted by the political establishment or by Turkish society. Yildiz told us that, "no one in the party, except Ahmet Turk, could be elected on their own," implying that most of them only had their seats because of PKK support and pressure.

Comment  
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17. (C) The DTP is trying to strike a balance between its strong connection to the PKK and its integration into the

political establishment as a legitimate political party. This is a dangerous position for them to be in given the closure case proceeding against the party in the Constitutional Court. It is unlikely, given the current political atmosphere, that a split would occur within the DTP because no one in the party wants to be seen as a traitor to the Kurdish cause -- either by their constituency or the PKK itself. However, if the new laws and regulations proposed by the AKP as part of the Democratic Opening initiative create real changes in the southeast, and PKK influence and control declines, a widening of the split within the party would not come as a surprise. We continue to encourage the positive messages of moderation coming out of the party and discourage messages condoning terrorist activity and violence.

JEFFREY

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